

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 172471

FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOL RPT LAGOS 8325 ACTION SECSTATE INFO LOME HAVANA USUN NY
6 JUL 78 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 8325

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PEPR, XA, CU, NI
SUBJ: REPORTED MESSAGE FROM OBASANJO TO CASTRO

REF: A) LAGOS 8092, B) LOME 2128

1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH POLCOUNS ON CUBAN FOREIGN
MINISTER'S RECENT VISIT TO LAGOS (SEPTEL), MEA AMERICAS DEPARTMENT
DIRECTOR AMBASSADOR MUSA SAID THAT HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO
TOLD CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER THAT NIGERIA APPRECIATES THE
STABILIZING ROLE CUBA HAS PERFORMED IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA
BUT HOPES CUBAN TROOPS WILL LEAVE AS SOON AS THEIR MISSION IS
FINISHED.

2. COMMENT: IT SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT OBASANJO GAVE
THE CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER MUCH THE SAME MESSAGE HE HAD
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EARLIER SENT TO CASTRO IN WRITTEN FORM (REFTELS). MUSA'S
ACCOUNT OF THE DISCUSSION DIFFERS SIGNIFICANTLY, HOWEVER,
FROM THE TOGOLESE ACCOUNT OF THE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION
BY THE INCLUSION OF THE QUALIFYING CONCEPT, "AS SOON
AS THEIR MISSION IS FINISHED." WE ARE INCLINED TO
CREDIT MUSA'S VERSION MORE THAN THAT OF THE TOGOLESE BECAUSE
THE LATTER VERSION HAS AN UNFRIENDLY AND PEREMPTORY RING TO IT

WHICH WE THINK OBASANJO WOULD NOT SISH TO CONVEY IN ADDRESSING CASTRO. WE WILL NEVERTHELESS CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AS PRECISE AN ACCOUNT OF THE WRITTEN MESSAGE AS POSSIBLE.

3. IN CONVERSATION LAST NIGHT WITH AMBASSADOR EASUM, CUBAN AMBASSADOR MOZORRA WAS EVASIVE IN RESPONSE TO EASUM'S PROBING ON NIGERIAN ATTITUDES CONCERNING CUBAN TROOPS. AMBASSADOR MOZORRA DWELT AT SOME LENGTH ON THE ETHNIC ROOTS OF THE SHABA PROBLEM, MAINTAINING THAT A POLITICAL RATHER THAN A MILITARY SOLUTION PROVIDED THE ONLY LONG-TERM ASSURANCE OF PEACE IN THE SHABA REGION. HE NEITHER DENIED NOR ADMITTED A CUBAN ROLE WITH REGARD TO THE RECENT MILITARY ACTIONS THERE. WHEN EASUM SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE SIMILARLY APPROPRIATE TO SEEK POLITICAL RATHER THAN MILITARY SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF ANGOLAN UNITY, MOZORRA CITED SAVIMBI'S STUBBORNESS AS A BLOCK TO SUCH A SOLUTION. EASUM SUGGESTED THAT NETO WAS PERHAPS SIMILARLY OBDURATE AND THAT BOTH LEADERS WOULD HAVE TO BE MORE WILLING TO COMPROMISE THAN HAD YET BEEN THE CASE. MOZORRA HAS PREVIOUSLY SERVED IN ZAIRE AND SEEMS UNUSUALLY WILLING TO ENGAGE IN NON-IDEOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS OF SUCH ISSUES. WE WILL ENDEAVOR TO DRAW HIM OUT FURTHER WHEN APPROPRIATE OCCASION PRESENTS ITSELF.

EASUM

UNQUOTE VANCE
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